

John Reinhardt's BOOK DESIGN NEWS

Fall 2009

WHERE FORM FOLLOWS FUNCTION

23 = N of P Q

23 = Number
of Puzzle Questions.

Here's something to do at your desk besides work. Try to decode the commonly-used phrases below using the example of the puzzle's title as a guide. And try hard to actually solve the puzzle without Googling the answers!

7 = W of the A W
1,0001 = A N
12 = S of the Z
54 = C in a D (with the Js)
9 = P in S SW
88 = P K
13 = S on the A F
32 = D F at which W F
18 = H on a G C
90 = D in a R A
200 = D for P G in M
8 = S on a S S
3 = B M (SHTR)
4 = Q in a G
24 = H in a D
1 = W on a U
5 = D in a Z C
57 = H V
11 = P on a F T
1,000 = W that a P is W
29 = D in F in a L Y
64 = S on a C
40 = D and N of the G F

RECENTLY COMPLETED BOOKS

The Community College Guide
BenBella Books, Inc.
Queers in History
BenBella Books, Inc.
Power Rabbi
Rabbi Fishel Jacobs
*Complete & Balanced:
101 Healthy Home-made
Meals for Dogs - 2nd Edition*
Hilary Watson

WHEN I GOT OUT OF THE ARMY IN 1973, I found myself struggling with what to do next in my life. I had been drafted while attending Layton School of Art and was considering resuming my art education at the University of Illinois. However, having served the previous three years as a computer technician at the U.S. Army headquarters in Europe, I also had a great desire to continue learning more about computers and electronics.

While deciding whether to return to school or accept a job offer with a major computer company, I found each day passed with no real accomplishment or gain on my ambitions. I had ideas about what I wanted to do with my life but it didn't seem as though I was getting any closer to realizing them.

Enter the 3 x 5 card. My dad, seeing that I was struggling, offered some simple advice that I still use today. He told me to take a 3 x 5 card and write down five to ten things that I would like to accomplish. I should consider this to be a sort of "to do" list for my life—a combination of short- and long-term goals. I thought long and hard about what I wanted to be doing in a week, a month, and a year, as well as five to ten years from that day.

Once I had completed my list, my dad told me to carry the card with me at all times. I was to look at the card daily to determine if what I was doing was helping me reach my goals. Amazingly, the card enabled me to stay on track, reminding me of my objectives.

Still deciding on my post-military career move, an opportunity to work for a local publishing company came to light. This was a great chance to get involved in an industry that was close to my heart—books and type. A career in graphics was on my card. I took the job and the rest is history.

I also use this "3 x 5 card method" to design books. I see so many books with haphazard designs, an obvious lack of continuity, and uneducated direction—the result of not having any master design plan. Good book design requires a plan that is considerate of all of the book's elements. The decisions made throughout the design and layout process of books is based on pre-determined goals and a "design destination."

After I've had a chance to look through a manuscript, I begin the design process by scratching out thoughts and ideas about the book (For those of you new to book design, pencil and paper will always be the essential tools of the trade!). These ideas can be anything from comments made by the author or editor; the subject of the book; physical requirements such as trim, page count, etc.; typeface ideas; photo placement; thoughts about the target readers; printer restrictions; etc.

Once I feel I have a strong hold on the limitations that define the project, I jot down a few ideas about the book on my "3 x 5 card." As I work through the design, starting with the title page, I refer back to my card to see if the decisions I am making relate to my overall design idea for the book. This method assures me that I am introducing elements or design features that have a connection or purpose with the design—it's important to make sure the form of the book accommodates its function.

1. numbered lists, bulleted list, sublist
2. create an industrial look and feel
3. extracts
4. pull quotes
5. 4 levels of heads
6. watch for math equations
7. landscape trim, use offset measure

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“3 X 5 CARD” (CONTINUED)

Step over here for a minute while I take you on a little trip down “analogy lane” (you didn’t think you’d get through this issue without an analogy, did you?). Let’s say you are getting ready for work and you are looking at the shirts hanging in your closet. Do you typically just pick one out without considering anything else, such as: the weather; what you will be doing during the day; what pants or skirt and shoes you will be wearing? Get the point?

Do you go grocery shopping without a list? If so, do you find yourself picking up lots of extra stuff while, more importantly, forgetting needed items? This happens because you didn’t have a list. This is where the 3 x 5 card method comes in handy.

Okay, let’s get back to the main story. Effective book design is more than randomly choosing styles, flowing type on a page, throwing in a couple of rules, and making everything fit on the page. If the design of a book is not fluid, relative, and meaningful, it can ruin reader comprehension and ultimately affect sales.

I believe most readers don’t consciously think about the design of a book (in terms of style, spacing, approach) but I do believe they “react” positively and negatively to the design. Readers may not know why they don’t like a book or don’t understand what they’ve read, and the design contributes to this reaction.

Like a good movie where viewers become absorbed by the story, forgetting that they are watching actors performing on a studio set, a properly designed book enables the reader to become absorbed in the author’s work without paying attention to the underlying design.

Each book offers its own set of requirements and, since we can’t ask readers ahead of time what kind of design they want or need, we rely on professional book designers to make these very important decisions. It is our job to make sure the book is built correctly, based on sound design and comprehension principles, and that it “works” for the reader.

Too much is at stake and too much has been invested to allow your book to be designed by just anyone. Show your authors and their readers you care by hiring a book design professional to do their book.

Try “3 x 5 card method” in your professional and personal life. Let me know what you think. I’ll bet “dollars to donuts” (I love that phrase — and I love donuts!) that you’ll find yourself accomplishing things more efficiently and effectively than ever before.

By the way, if you are trying to lose weight or stop smoking, the “3 x 5 card method” is a proven winner! You need remember to do two things, however. You must look at the card daily and you must really have to *want* to accomplish the goals you have written on the card.

Good luck!

Deadlines and bottom lines are important, but not at the expense of the text line.

It is not so much a matter of what is read, but what is understood. Poor book design can hinder the reader’s ability to comprehend and retain what is read.

Many publishers wonder why sales of their books don’t meet expectations. A poorly designed book can be the overlooked culprit. When a potential reader opens a book, they can immediately feel the effects of perceived value.

Do you love potato chips?

Do you avoid chips because of the high calories? Well, this is your lucky day. Check out my simple recipe for microwave potato chips and enjoy a fun and healthy snack! Be a magician at your next office party - take a bowl of these chips watch and ‘em disappear! And be creative by adding seasoning prior to cooking. Personally, I like Morton’s Season-All®.

www.bookdesign.com/html/chips___cookies.htm



“Either write something worth reading or do things worth the writing.”

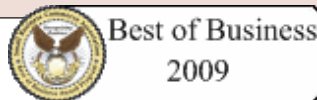
—BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

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Helping publishers and authors get the most out of their books for more than 30 years.

You can nominate me for the 2010
Best of Business Award at...



<http://www.sbcaawards.org/nominate.aspx>.
Thank you!

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